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Visions of Future Education using educational technologies

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"At first we shape our tools, thereafter they shape us"

This is a saying attributed to McLuhan that we've held to be true enough for more than half a century. Technological determinism has haunted storytelling for centuries. Ask the Greek Titan Prometheus.

But how can we know when we're in the stage of "at first"? Is this "at first" right now, or was it yesterday or tomorrow? At what point are we in the "thereafter" stage, where we presumably lose our ability to control ourselves and our tools? Might we be always in an "at first" stage and therefore always in control, or is that time forever past and we are merely struggling with the unending consequences, as Prometheus is? Perhaps we can learn to appreciate all the consequences instead of trying to control them, as Epimetheus did - Prometheus' brother.

Being deeply conscious of how we create, use and then live with our tools and their consequences seems to be the best chance we have at establishing an acceptable relationship with technology, and maybe even find something like "a happy encounter with new technology".

So I want to suggest consciousness as way to think about the future of education and educational technologies. I want to preserve and expand the space in which we are allowed to talk about the political, the social and the environmental. I'll apply this critical consciousness to data and learning analytics, learning management systems, and the internet and social media - to question the assumptions, principles and integrity of these technologies and the things we imagine we might do with them?